

Cultural Heritage Promotion at City College of Angeles in the Midst of Pandemic: Programs, Strategies, Challenges, and Prospects

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Educational institutions are avenues for cultural heritage promotion. Because culture has to be experienced, typically, cultural heritage promotion activities are done through face-to-face and hands-on interactions. The unprecedented emergence of the pandemic has affected the delivery of cultural heritage promotion activities of City College of Angeles (CCA). This paper presents the cultural heritage promotion at City College of Angeles during the pandemic. Through documentation and survey, data were gathered and analyzed. Four major elements were included in the survey: 1) technical and organization, 2) platform, 3) relevance of the content, and the 4) overall impression. There were 60 participants; all were CCA students. Amidst this adversity, cultural heritage promotion has continued and shifted to virtual programs, utilizing technology. Through the Institute for Cultural Heritage Education, there have been a number of cultural programs conducted since the start of the pandemic. Although there were challenges encountered, the participants evaluated the online programs as “very good”. It can be noted that even the pandemic cannot obstruct the urge to promote culture. Innovations through technological platforms can potentially deliver effective and efficient programs.

Keywords: cultural heritage promotion, events management, virtual events

Introduction

Culture is a vital component of a community. It is part of the daily individual and collective activities of people. Using the lens of cultural study, the attitude and behavior of humans are reflective of culture. Thus, it provides a sense of identity (Kottak, 2009). Members of a cultural community share common attributes and determinants as influenced by their cultural profile. Matsumoto (1996) mentioned that cultural identity can be manifested through attitudes, values, beliefs, behavior, or of all, since culture is integrative in nature. These manifestations can be vividly observed on people’s typical and occasional activities.

Cultural transmission can be observed in two ways, vertical and horizontal. Vertical transmission pertains to the intergenerational process of transferring of culture. On the other hand, horizontal transmission aims to have a wider dissemination of culture in the society. Zerrudo (2020) suggested three ways of cultural transmission – through education, legislation, and/or tradition. As an avenue for knowledge generation and transmission, the educational sector plays a powerful force to integrate culture. Treated with high regard in the society where individuals are expected to abide, schools are plausible areas of cultural promotion that may result to cultural transmission and learning. Laws are also believed to be effective to promote

culture. In the perspective of traditional practices, a natural way of transmitting and learning culture is reflected.

Culture is a concept relative to heritage. Culture and heritage are inherited from past generations. The historical values that they bring provide identity and understanding in the present. The valuing of the people holds inspiration for future generation. Thus, culture and heritage, as an intergenerational element of the society, transcends the dimension of time.

Zerrudo (2020) categorized heritage into two, 1) natural heritage and 2) cultural heritage. Natural heritage is the actual environmental and ecological landscape of a community. It is where culture develops. The result of the influences of environmental and ecological elements of heritage is cultural heritage. Cultural heritage is defined as the totality of cultural property preserved and developed through time and passed to posterity (RA 10066 – National Cultural Heritage Act of 2006). United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) describes cultural heritage as the legacy of physical artifacts and intangible attributes of a group of society that are inherited from past generation, maintained in the present and bestowed for the benefit of future generation.

The study, preservation, and promotion of cultural heritage have changed over time. From material culture, an emphasis has dramatically involved intangible cultural heritage. Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) is described as the traditions, practices, or living expressions of a particular community, which are inherited from past generations (“What is Intangible Cultural Heritage?”, n.d.). Different cultural groups and communities may also share similar ICH because of proximity, and common history. Because of this, cultural groups and communities may develop social cohesion with significant uniqueness and distinctions to one another. Another element of ICH is the acceptance of the members of the community. Acceptance means integrating ICH as part of the collective identity of the members.

Intangible cultural heritage is the soul of many cultural communities. It is regarded as wealth and treasure of the people that can be passed on from generations to generations. Its social value makes the members of the community bound. Thus, to preserve the identity of a cultural community, its ICH has to be preserved. However, ICH is being ignored in some communities because of the mindset that ICH has low economic importance at large. This may result to cultural change especially for small cultural communities.

The United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage (2003) categorized ICH into five domains: 1) oral traditions and expressions including language as a vehicle of the ICH, 2) performing arts, 3) social practices, rituals, and festive events, 4) knowledge and practices concerning nature and the universe, and 5) traditional craftsmanship. Oral traditions and expressions act to transmit knowledge, beliefs, and values of a particular cultural group. Oral traditions and expressions are in the forms of myth, folklore, songs, chants, riddles, legends and alike; all are spoken. Performing arts are in the forms of music, dance, and theater. Dance that is performed through body movements is typically partnered with music, and portrays meanings significant to the group and event. The combination of dance, music, acting, and dialogue is what composes a theater. Social practices, rituals, and festive events show a community identity. Social practices are reflected in the daily lives of the people, while rituals and festive events happen during occasional activities. Intangible Cultural Heritage also shows respect and attributions to nature and the universe. Being spiritual, cultural beliefs and practices are influenced by the natural environment. Traditional craftsmanship pertains to the underlying cultural processes and procedures to produce crafts that are a sort of material culture.

Similar to other social phenomena, culture is dynamic. It changes as a result of different factors such as the advancement of technology, globalization, and socio-political activities. In the Philippines, plans and actions have been in place to protect, preserve, and promote cultural heritage. Republic Act 10066 (RA10066) or also known as the National Cultural Heritage Act of 2009 provides the a) protection, preservation, conservation and promotion of the nation's cultural heritage, its property and histories, and the ethnicity of local communities, b) establishment and strengthening of cultural institutions, and c) protection of cultural workers and of their professional development and well-being. This is to provide a balanced atmosphere of the past and present society. In the local setting, many local government units have taken their parts in the preservation, conservation, protection, and promotion of local cultural heritage.

In the Kapampangan region, various institutions and organizations have done programs to safeguard and promote Kapampangan cultural heritage. Educational institutions established units that perform cultural heritage protection, conservation, and promotion. As a powerful cultural promotion force, schools also address the concern of migration. Bhugra and Becker (2005) affirmed that migration implicates the mental well-being, cultural norms and customs of the immigrants. It also affects the culture of the community, especially when migrants are accommodated in a sense that the members of the community adapt to the culture of the migrants.

Integrating culture in education can be associated to the levels of multicultural content. Banks (1999) provided four levels of multicultural content: 1) the contribution approach, 2) the additive approach, 3) the transformation approach, and 4) the social action approach. The contribution approach pertains to the integration of local holidays, festivities, personalities, and significant local events in the lessons or school activities. Additive approach is the integration of ethnic or cultural topics and activities to the curriculum without significantly modifying it. However, the two approaches are in the surface level of multicultural education only. The transformation level aims more. When the curriculum is developed to aim cultural understanding and appreciation, the transformation level is achieved. In this, students are engaged to analyze cultural issues and concerns from various cultural perspectives. The highest level aims that students make decision and take actions on various cultural issues through reflection and analysis as tools. That is the social action approach.

City College of Angeles, a local college in Angeles City, is mandated to help the local government and the community in protecting, conserving, and promoting local culture among the students and the community. This mandate is reflected in one of the core values of the academic institution, patrimony. To reflect this in the procedures and activities of the college, a 3-unit course on Kapampangan Culture is required among all students. Apart from this, the unit under the Office of the President and the Center for Culture and the Arts was created to institutionalize the college's activities relative to cultural promotion. The Institute for Cultural Heritage Education (ICHE) has been existence since July 1, 2019. Cultural promotion activities vary from seminars, trainings, workshops, research dissemination through conferences, and alike. Although emphasis has been dedicated to Kapampangan culture, subject matters have covered mother-tongue and multilingual education, Philippine history and other cultures, and socio-cultural and religious activities that make the entirety of Philippine and Kapampangan culture. All of the undertakings of ICHE were done through in-campus and out-campus activities. The unprecedented occurrence of the pandemic has also affected the functions of ICHE in regard to the mode of delivery. To be dynamic and remain faithful to its mandate, ICHE has transcended to full digital modality.

This paper documented the activities undergone by the Institute for Cultural Heritage Education in so far as the pandemic is present. It also examined the challenges and strategies in the conduct of online delivery of programs. It also assessed the impression of students on the different activities and programs ICHE have conducted during the pandemic.

Methodology

This study reflects a combination of qualitative and quantitative research types. The qualitative part includes the inventory of the online activities of the Institute for Cultural Heritage Education relative to cultural promotion since the pandemic emerged. For the assessment of the impressions of the students towards the cultural promotion activities, deriving at the weighted mean was done on the data gathered through survey using an online platform. Four major elements were surveyed, namely: 1) technical and organization, 2) platform, 3) relevance of the content, and the 4) overall impression. The participants in the survey were a total of 60 who attended the activities. All of which were students of City College of Angeles, who are the primary beneficiaries of the activities. During actual activities, participants ranged from 50 to 150 student-participants.

Results and Discussion

The Institute for Cultural Heritage Education is primarily mandated to conduct activities that promote local and national culture within the school community. This aims to conserve and transmit cultural traditions to the students and other stakeholders. In the occurrence of the pandemic in 2020, the typical school-based and physical activities were compromised. The need to transition to an online modality was put in place. Thus, the following online activities were conducted from May to December 2020.

List of Cultural Promotion Activities Conducted by the Institute for Cultural Heritage Education.

Table 1. Webinars

Name of the Activity	Date	Nature of the Activity	Speaker/s	Platform
Role of Language in Education Vis-à-vis Cultural Heritage Preservation	May 12, 2020	Lecture-Forum	Marvin C. Punsalan <i>Head, Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</i> <i>City College of Angeles</i>	Zoom
Celebration of the National Flag Days	May 29, 2020	Lecture	Grace G. Lobo <i>Head, Center for Culture for the Arts</i> <i>City College of Angeles</i>	Zoom
Commemorating Philippine Independence, Recognizing the Nations' Multiculturalism and Multilingualism	June 8, 2020	Webinar	Marvin C. Punsalan <i>Head, Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</i> <i>City College of Angeles</i>	Zoom
Philippine Independence in Times of Crisis: Redefining its Values and Significance	June 9, 2020	Webinar	Ian Christopher Alfonso <i>Senior Researcher, National Historical Commission of the Philippines</i>	Zoom
Black Lives & Filipino Freedom: Celebrating Independence Day in Solidarity	June 10, 2020	Webinar	Kirby T. Araullo <i>University of California-Davis</i>	Zoom
The Independence: Its History and Our Responsibility	June 11, 2020	Webinar	Grace G. Lobo <i>Head, Center for Culture for the Arts</i> <i>City College of Angeles</i>	Zoom
The Community as a Bedrock for the love of Country and	June 12, 2020	Webinar	Dr. Richard G.	Zoom

Patrimony: Values & Significance			Daenos <i>College President, City College of Angeles</i>	
Kabiasnan Lecture Series 1 Child-centered and Inquiry-based Learning Practices	June 18, 2020	Webinar	Pauline M. Mangulabnan <i>University of Fukui, Japan</i>	Zoom
Kabiasnan Lecture Series 2 Time to Junk Toxic Textbooks: Learn Kaalamang Bayan Amid KuwentongKutsero	June 24, 2020	Webinar	Arnold Molina Azurin <i>University of the Philippines-Diliman</i>	Zoom and Facebook Page
Kabiasnan Lecture Series 3 What Language Teachers Should Know About HOTS	July 1, 2020	Webinar	Dr. Jennie V. Jocson <i>Vice President forAcademics, Philippine Normal University</i>	Zoom and Facebook Page
Kabiasnan Lecture Series 4 Developing Teachers' Content Knowledge and Pedagogy in the L1 & L2	July 11, 2020	Webinar	Dr. Diane Dekker <i>Summer Institute of Linguistics</i>	Zoom and Facebook Page
AngDapatMabatid ng mgaPinoysaWikangPambansa	August 15, 2020	Webinar	Dr. Ricardo Ma. D. Nolasco <i>University of the Philippines-Diliman</i>	Zoom and Facebook Page
Wikako, Wikamo: Hanguan at Tulay ng Pagkatuto (PagdalumatsaUnangWika)	August 17, 2020	Webinar	Marvin C. Punsalan <i>Head, Institute for Cultural Heritage Education City College of Angeles</i>	Facebook Page
Structure of Kapampangan Verbs	August 22, 2020	Webinar	Earvin Christian T. Pelagno Rexie B. Quizon Johans B. Cruz	Zoom and Facebook Page

			Kriziel M. Dela Rosa <i>University of the Philippines-Diliman</i>	
The Forgotten Luzones: The First Filipinos in America	October 17, 2020	Lecture	Kirby T. Araullo <i>University of California-Davis</i>	Zoom and Facebook Page

Table 2. Online Celebration/Commemoration

Name of the Activity	Date	Nature of the Activity	Platform
National Heritage Month	May	Celebration	Facebook Page
Tabukbuk Exhibit by Arch. Manuel Trinidad Madrid in line with the celebration of National Heritage Month	May 27, 2020	Celebration/Exhibit	Facebook Page
Philippine Independence Day	June 12, 2020	Celebration	Facebook Page
159 th Birth Anniversary Commemoration of Dr. Jose P. Rizal	June 19, 2020	Celebration	Facebook Page
Talugigi: Pamandalit at Pamaggale King AmanungSisuan in line with the celebration of Language Month	August 6, 2020	Online Event	Zoom
Laudate Maria: Criyadaning Rosario	September 8, 2020	Celebration	Facebook Page
191 st Feast of the Holy Guardian Angels	October 2, 2020	Celebration	Facebook Page
Fiesta Virgenning Santissimo La Naval De Angeles	October 11, 2020	Celebration	Facebook Page
191 st Founding Anniversary Holy Rosary Parish Church	December 8, 2020	Celebration	Facebook Page
Ka-449 Banuaning Pangatatagning Provincianing Pampanga	December 11, 2020	Celebration	Facebook Page
Pamanaya Queng Aslag: Promoting Angeles Traditional Lanterns	December 18, 2020	Online event/Annual College Festival	Zoom and Facebook Page

Table 3. Culture-related Research Presentation

Name of the Activity	Date	Nature of the Activity	Speaker/s	Platform
Research Presentation titled “The Emergence of Students’ Neologisms as Counterculture to Academic Language Use” at the Bantula: International Conference on Culture-based Research and Education organized by the National Commission for Culture and the Arts	November 20, 2020	Research Presentation	Marvin C. Punsalan <i>Head, Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</i> Joshua S. Nares Shaira Valdez Francis F. Diaz <i>Faculty Members, Institute of Education, Arts and Sciences</i> <i>City College of Angeles</i>	Zoom
Research Presentation titled “AslagParul as a Signature College Festival of City College of Angeles: Promoting Local Culture and Excellence in Events Management” at the 1 st Asia Pacific Virtual Events Conference organized by the Asia Pacific Institute for Events Management and Taylor’s University, Malaysia	November 25, 2020	Research Presentation	Dr. Richard G. Daenos <i>College President, City College of Angeles</i> Marvin C. Punsalan <i>Head, Institute for Cultural Heritage Education</i> <i>City College of Angeles</i>	Zoom

The activities reflected in the tables are of various natures presented in chronological order. Generally, there were three types of activities, 1) webinars, 2) online celebration, and 3) research presentation. As for the webinars, these were conducted through the Zoom application, a videoconferencing platform. The speakers were all experts in the field. The topics vary but all are anchored on cultural concepts. The online celebrations commemorated community traditions and beliefs. To make these celebrations and commemorations known to the students and other stakeholders, Facebook, a social media platform, was utilized. It is also noteworthy to mention that a number of these activities, especially the webinars, were attended by outside community coming from members of different educational institutions such as the Department of Education teachers, private school teachers, college and university instructors and professors. Outside community participants were also coming from places across the nation

and the globe. This can be attributed to the larger scope of the use of social media that can be extended to places.

In addition to the promotional activities through webinars and online commemorations and other similar events, attendance to research conferences that involved culture as the main theme was also observed. Two papers relative to local culture and language and culture were presented in international and national conferences, respectively. The researchers were faculty members of City College of Angeles who were also involved in the various cultural promotion activities.

Challenges Encountered and Strategies Conducted

The major challenges that were encountered were the appropriate and effective platform to use in transition from physical activities to online and the needed resources to continue conducting cultural promotion activities. Social media and emerging videoconferencing platforms were utilized. As a result, promotion and invitation were done with ease. The maximum yet ethical use of social media and other online platforms were observed and seen to be efficient in the new normal activities brought about by the pandemic.

Another concern was the scarcity of resources such as having a technical team and financial resources for the webinar speakers. Because of the lack of manpower of the unit, faculty members were tapped to function as technical team members, facilitators, and graphic designer. Although the need for honorarium for the speakers was foreseen, it was fortunate that it was not made an issue because of the mutual understanding on the situation for both parties. All speakers shared their expertise and time for no financial requisite and conditions. It was through effective coordination that made this plausible.

Students Assessment

Table 2. Overall Assessment on the Activities

Technical and Organization	Platform	Relevance of the Content	Overall Impression	Weighted Mean
3.72	3.56	3.89	3.79	3.74

*Legend: 4.50-5.00 – Excellent
3.50-4.49 – Very Good
2.50-3.49 – Good
1.50-2.49 – Fair
1.00 -1.49 – Needs Improvement*

Table 2 shows the evaluation of the respondents in the survey conducted. The first descriptor, technical and organization, refers to the technical assistance, time allotment, and program flow of the activities. This descriptor garnered a mean of 3.72 that corresponds to a “very good” rating. Platform which pertains to the modality and medium used got a mean of 3.56 which means “very good”. Aside from the face-to-face activities, social media and videoconferencing platforms were utilized. As per the relevance of the content, a mean of 3.89 was revealed and is interpreted as very good. The overall impression got a mean of 3.79 which means very good. The weighted mean of 3.74 revealed that the respondents assessed the general delivery of the activities as very good.

The data that were revealed from the survey can be used as a point of reference in modifying the activities.

Prospects

Even though the pandemic has affected the different social institutions such as schools, no adversity can prevent the urge to attain the set goals. Technology integration has redefined the delivery of different programs. It can reach more people than of face-to-face interactions. It can be presented through social media where most people are active. And it can provide ease on the part of the speakers, technical team, and the participants of the program for everyone is in the comfort of one's own home.

The delivery of various cultural promotion activities through technological platforms has been found effective and efficient. Thus, it can be pointed out that technology integration is an effective strategy to cover a vast population of audience making the promotion extended.

Conclusion

It can be noted that cultural heritage promotion is an integral element of community development. Cultural heritage provides the identity of the community and the place. The cultural undertakings of the school can contribute to the place branding, not only of the college but also of the entire community. Adversities may come such as the pandemic, but resiliency and innovativeness can still play major roles in the achievement of goals. The advent of technology must be maximized to address the needs and trend of time. The delivery of cultural activities can be conducted through the use of different information and communication technology (ICT) tools; this provides up-to-date information for the people. Although virtual, the sense of patrimony can still be instilled through relevant and meaningful programs.

Recommendation

Based on the results and conclusion, it can be recommended to regularly conduct a program evaluation to gather information as to the quality of the program. This is a relevant element of events management for future activities. The integration of technology is also recommended to be sustained as it addresses the media preference of the audience in the 21st century.

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